

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a network of computers, a method of generating a hyperlink on a web page on a client computer, comprising the steps of:
 - 5 sending through the network a request having an input set of hyperlink parameters; and
 - in response to said request, receiving a response comprising at least one of:
 - an output set of hyperlink parameters; and
 - 10 data necessary for generating at least one hyperlink.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting said input set of hyperlink parameters from a plurality of input sets of hyperlink parameters.
3. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said input set of hyperlink parameters
15 includes a user name and a password.
4. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least one of said input set of hyperlink parameters and said output set of hyperlink parameters includes any combination of at least one of: Merchant identifier, Affiliate Site identifier, Section Link Group identifier, Link identifier, Image identifier, and Program
20 identifier.
5. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said step of receiving includes receiving the response in Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.

6. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises code data necessary to execute each said hyperlink.
7. A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said code data is conforming to the
5 Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) standard.
8. A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said code data includes a uniform resource locator (URL).
9. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises, for each hyperlink, visual representation data
10 describing at least one form of visual appearance of said hyperlink on a web page.
10. A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein said visual representation data includes a uniform resource locator (URL) for an image.
11. A method as claimed in Claim 9, wherein said visual representation data
15 includes indications of dimensions of an image.
12. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least one of the steps of sending and receiving includes using the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).
13. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said step of sending includes
20 encrypting the request with a key identifiable by a key ID sent unencrypted together with said request.

14. A method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of combining said input set of hyperlink parameters and said output set of hyperlink parameters to form a second input set of hyperlink parameters.
15. A computer system for generating hyperlinks on a web page on a client computer, comprising:
- 5 a client computer configured for communication in a network of computers; and
- a processor routine executing on said client computer, said processor routine:
- 10 (i) sending through the network a request containing an input set of hyperlink parameters; and
- (ii) in response to said request, receiving a response comprising at least one of:
- 15 an output set of hyperlink parameters; and
- data necessary for generating at least one hyperlink.
16. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said processor routine allows user selection of said input set of hyperlink parameters from among a plurality of input sets of hyperlink parameters.
17. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said input set of hyperlink parameters includes a user name and a password.
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18. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein at least one of said input set of hyperlink parameters and said output set of hyperlink parameters includes any combination of at least one of: Merchant identifier, Affiliate Site identifier, Section Link Group identifier, Link identifier, Image identifier, and Program
- 25 identifier.

19. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said output set of hyperlink parameters is in Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.
20. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises code data necessary to execute
5 said hyperlink.
21. A computer system as claimed in Claim 20, wherein said code data is conforming to the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) standard.
22. A computer system as claimed in Claim 20, wherein said code data includes a uniform resource locator (URL).
- 10 23. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises, for each hyperlink, visual representation data describing at least one form of visual appearance of said hyperlink on a web page.
24. A computer system as claimed in Claim 23, wherein said visual representation
15 data includes a uniform resource locator (URL) for an image.
25. A computer system as claimed in Claim 23, wherein said visual representation data includes indications of dimensions of an image.
26. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the processor routine utilizes the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) in at least one of sending a
20 request and receiving a response.

27. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said request is encrypted with a key identifiable by a key ID sent unencrypted together with said request.
28. A computer system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said processor routine allows combining said input set of hyperlink parameters and said output set of
5 hyperlink parameters to form a second input set of hyperlink parameters.
29. A method of delivering hyperlink generation information from a server computer, comprising the steps of:
- receiving a request having an input set of hyperlink parameters; and
in response to said request, sending a response comprising at least one
10 of:
- an output set of hyperlink parameters; and
data necessary for generating at least one hyperlink.
30. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein at least one of said input set of hyperlink parameters includes a user name and a password.
- 15 31. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein at least one of said input set of hyperlink parameters and said output set of hyperlink parameters includes any combination of at least one of: Merchant ID, Affiliate Site ID, Section Link Group ID, Link ID, Image ID, and Program ID.
32. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said output set of hyperlink
20 parameters is represented in the Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.
33. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises code data necessary to execute each said hyperlink.

34. A method as claimed in Claim 33, wherein said code data is conforming to the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) standard.
35. A method as claimed in Claim 33, wherein said code data includes a uniform resource locator (URL).
- 5 36. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises visual representation data describing at least one form of visual appearance of said at least one hyperlink on a web page.
37. A method as claimed in Claim 36, wherein said visual representation data includes a uniform resource locator (URL) for an image.
- 10 38. A method as claimed in Claim 36, wherein said visual representation data includes indications of dimensions of an image.
39. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein at least one of said steps of receiving and sending includes using the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP).
40. A method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said request is encrypted with a key
15 identifiable by a key ID; and
said step of receiving includes receiving the key ID unencrypted together with said request.
41. A system for delivering hyperlink information from a server computer, comprising:
20 a server computer; and
a server process executing on said server computer for:

- (i) receiving a request containing an input set of hyperlink parameters;
and
- (ii) in response to said request, sending a response comprising at least one of:

5 an output set of hyperlink parameters; and
 data necessary for generating at least one hyperlink.

42. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein said input set of hyperlink parameters includes a user name and a password.

43. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein at least one of said input set of
10 hyperlink parameters and said output set of hyperlink parameters includes any combination of at least one of: Merchant ID, Affiliate Site ID, Section Link Group ID, Link ID, Image ID, and Program ID.

44. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein said output set of hyperlink parameters is represented in the Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.

15 45. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises code data necessary to execute said hyperlink.

46. A system as claimed in Claim 45, wherein said code data is conforming to the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) standard.

20 47. A system as claimed in Claim 45, wherein said code data includes a uniform resource locator (URL).

48. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein said data necessary for generating said at least one hyperlink comprises visual representation data describing at least one form of visual appearance of said hyperlink on a web page.
49. A system as claimed in Claim 48, wherein said visual representation data includes a uniform resource locator (URL) for an image.
50. A system as claimed in Claim 48, wherein said visual representation data includes indications of dimensions of an image.
51. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein the server process uses Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) for at least one of receiving a request and sending a response.
52. A system as claimed in Claim 41, wherein said request is encrypted with a key identifiable by a key ID received unencrypted together with said request.